

Culture in the bathroom

- a study of cultural hindrances and potentials for recycling of urine and faeces

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Background

Recycling of urine and faeces is a way of ensuring a more sustainable way of handling sewage and at the same time taking the nutrients back to farming land. The idea is that urine and faeces are separated at the source. Afterwards, the nutrients can be used in farming. In the attempt to develop a recycling technology for urine and faeces focus has primarily been on getting an understanding of the technical barriers and possibilities. User surveys and historical studies however show that social and cultural aspects, such as toilet cultures, habits and discourses about hygiene and cleanliness are important elements. There is therefore a need for a greater understanding of what kind of social and cultural aspects that are important to consider in relation to our toilets and bathrooms. Besides, it is important to understand the impact that these aspects have on the possibility of implementing a technology for recycling urine and faeces.

Objective

The aim of this project is firstly to describe, the social and cultural aspects integrated in our toilets and bathrooms and the daily use of these. Secondly, it is to evaluate how these aspects affect the possibility of changing the present way of handling urine and faeces.

The theory is mainly inspired by a practice-oriented approach that bridges between theories of practice, consumption and Science of Technology and Society (STS). Here, focus is on understanding dynamics of change within sociotechnical systems and ordinary practices. The method is based on a literature review regarding the historical development of bathrooms, a review of the Danish dwelling magazine called *Bo Bedre*, observations in relation to the present publicity of bathrooms and qualitative interviews. The empirical focus is on bathrooms and toilets seen in an everyday life perspective.

Progress - 2006

I have handed in the thesis in June and I am now preparing for the defence. The two last articles have been sent to journals and I am waiting for the response of the reviewers. There will be some revisions on the last two articles, when I get the comments of the reviewers.

Publications

Christensen, T.H.; Godskesen, M.; Røpke, I.; Gram-Hansen, K. and Quitzau, M.-B. (2007) [Greening the Danes? Experience with consumption and environment policies.](#) *Journal of Consumer Policy* 30:pp. 91-116.

Quitzau, M. and Røpke, I. (0) [Bathroom transformation: From hygiene to well-being?](#) *Home Cultures*.

Quitzau, M. and Røpke, I. (0) [The construction of normal expectations: A case study on consumption drivers.](#) *Journal of industrial ecology*.

- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2006) [Water-flushing toilets: systemic development and path-dependent characteristics and their bearing on technological alternatives](#). *Technology in Society*.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2005) [Badeværelser i dag - mellem oplevelse og ritual](#) [Bathrooms today - between treat and ritual]. [oral] Presentation at *Annual meeting of the Society of History of Technology (Danish Society)*, Odense Tekniske Skole, Odense, Denmark, 19th August 2005.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2005) [Bathroom practices today](#). Paper presented at 7th Conference of European Sociological Association, Torun, Poland, 9th-12th September 2005.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2005) [Bathrooms as context for daily water practices](#). [oral] Presentation at *Traces of water: developing the social science of domestic water consumption, Workshop 2 - Water practices in everyday life*, UKWIR, London, 9th June 2005.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2005) [Environmental impacts of embedded bathroom practices](#). [oral] Presentation at *Kitchen and bathrooms: Changing technologies, practices and social organisation - implications for sustainability*, CRIC, University of Manchester, England, 27-28 January 2005.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2004) [Changing ideas of bodily cleanliness](#). Paper presented at 6th International Summer Academy on Technology Studies. Urban Infrastructure in Transition: What can we learn from history?, Deutschlandsberg, Austria, July 11-17 2004.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2004) [Danish bathroom stories – a socio-technical study of what the present renovation boom is about](#). Paper presented at 4S & EASST Conference 2004: Public Proofs - Science, Technology and Democracy, Paris, 25-28th of August 2004.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2004) [Kultur i badeværelset: om integrationen af kultur, teknologi og samfund](#) [Culture in the bathroom: On the interplay of culture, technology and society]. *NordNytt*(90):pp. 135-150.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt (2003) [Urine, faeces and culture](#). Poster presented at Dry Toilet 2003, 1st International Dry-toilet Conference, Tampere, Finland, August 20-23rd 2003.*
- Quitza, Maj-Britt; Christensen, Toke H.; Gram-Hansen, Kirsten; Røpke, Inge and Godskesen, Mirjam (2005) [Greening the Danes](#). Paper presented at 7th Nordic Environmental Social Science Research Conference, Göteborg, Sweden, 15-17 June 2005.**
- Quitza, Maj-Britt; Moeller, Jacob and Magid, Jakob (2004) [Attitudes towards utilization of composted domestic waste, sludge, urine and faeces as manure in agriculture](#). Report, National Environmental Research Institute of Denmark, Dept. of Policy Analysis.

Time schedule details (dec. 2002 – juni 2007)

Total period of leave: I was on a maternity leave in 2006

Total period of extra employment on PhD project: Has been delayed 6 months.

Date of submission of thesis: 18th of June 2007

Date for defence: 24th of October 2007